Cp 283
H92

HUMPHREY'S HISTORY OF PROPAGATION SOCIETY

THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA

THE COLLECTION OF
NORTH CAROLINIANA
ENDOWED BY
JOHN SPRUNT HILL
CLASS OF 1889

Cp283
H92

Church Rec.

HUMPHREY'S HISTORY OF THE PROPAGATION SOCIETY.*

Chap. VI

Missionaries sent to N.C.

C/339.6

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the State Library of North Carolina. Grant issued to subcontractor NHC CH for Duke University's Religion in North Carolina project

http://archive.org/details/assessmentofthemp

CHAPTER VI.

Missionaries sent to North Carolina. The Rev. Mr. Blair sent Missionary, undergoes great hardships, returns to England. Other Missionaries sent thither; they meet with many difficulties, return to England. The Tuscararo Indians form a conspiracy against the English; ravage the colony; are at length defeated. Mr. Newnam sent Missionary; takes great pains in his Mission; dies.

1. The Society had a very early knowledge of the destitute condition of this Province. The inhabitants, in the year 1702, amounted to above 6000 souls, chiefly English, besides slaves; a great number of the people were desirous of having the Church of England Worship settled among them; there were some Presbyterians, and fewer Quakers here, but many persons careless of all religion, and of a profane mind. However, some of the principal inhabitants did, in a very serious manner, and with a true Christian spirit, set forth their wants of a ministry to the Society.

But the Society received the fullest information from the Reverend Mr. Blair, who had been an itinerant Missionary in that country, supported with the bounty of £50 from the Lord Weymouth. He arrived in North Carolina in January, 1703, and entered upon the duties of his mission with great diligence and pains. The people were settled in such distant plantations on the several rivers' sides, that he was obliged to be continually traveling from place to place, which could not possibly be done without a guide, both on account of the badness of the roads, and difficulty to find them if once lost, as also by reason of the deserts between several plantations, some extending forty miles in length, without any inhabitant. Besides, there was another exceeding inconvenience in traveling this country; it was watered with seven great rivers, all without any bridges over them; two only which could be passed on horseback; the others had ferries over them, in some places,

and the passage there was chargeable. However, he exerted himself for some time, bought horses for himself and a guide, traveled over all the country, and preached twice every Lord's day, for above a year; and sometimes on the week days, when the people could bring their children for baptism. He baptized above one hundred during his continuance here. He was very useful to revive a sense of religion among them; and the people, in pursuance of an act of Assembly there, began to build three small churches. But he found the labor of continual traveling in excessive heats in summer, and extreme colds in winter, beyond his strength of body and mind. He would have resided on one precinct of the country, and officiated to all who could come to him; but the people were dissatisfied with this, telling him, Lord Weymouth's charity was intended for the good of the whole country. An Act of Assembly had been passed a little before, allowing £30 a year, of that country money, making about £10 sterling for a Minister in each division; but that Act was not then confirmed by the Proprietaries, so that he had no allowance from the inhabitants. These hardships rendered the mission so difficult, that some time after, he was forced to return to England, quite sunk with poverty and sickness.

2. This unprovided condition of the people, engaged the Society to assist them. In 1707, they sent over the Rev. Mr. Adams and Mr. Gordon, itinerant Missionaries, with a better support than Mr. Blair had. They were both very sensible they should meet with many discouragements in their mission; however, they entered on their office with much resolution. Upon their first arrival, they entertained hopes of good success in their labors, from the encouragement which they received from some worthy persons in the administration of the government at that time. But soon after their arrival, many ignorant and irreligious persons in the Colony, raised such factions and animosities, and above all, made such a blasphemous ridicule of the most sacred ordinances of the Gospel, in a manner too profane to be mentioned, as occasioned long and public distractions, and mightily retarded the progress of the Gospel. Mr. Adams and Mr. Gordon persevered, notwithstanding, in their missions. The whole Province was divided into four large precincts, Chowan, Paquiman, Pasquetanck, and Carotuck, besides Bath county, or Pamlico Division.

Mr. Gordon had the care of Chowan and Paquiman. Chowan is the westermost, the largest and thinnest settled; the people had built a Church sometime before his coming there, but it was small, and sorrily put together, and therefore they then had intentions to build another. There were very few Quakers or dissenters in this Parish. The people indeed were ignorant, few that could read, and fewer write, even of the better sort; yet the body of them were very serious and well-inclined, ready to embrace, both in public and in private, all opportunities of being instructed. Mr. Gordon spent most of his labors in this precinct, it is very large, and divided by the great Sound and several rivers, which made his cure very laborious; however, he visited all parts of it, and baptised above one hundred children. Mr. Gordon had also the

next precinct, Paquiman, under his care. There was a little compact church built here, with more care and expense, and better contrived than that in Chowan. The Quakers here were very numerous. This precinct is not so large as the other, but the roads are worse. The people were very ignorant, and loose in their lives, unconcerned as to religion, through their want of Ministers and good books.

Mr. Gordon was in hopes the feuds and animosities among the people, would have abated in a little time, but on the contrary, they grew higher, and the public distractions increased. He found himself therefore necessitated to return to England; which he did, bringing with him letters to the Lord Bishop of London, and to the Society, from the two precincts which he attended; certifying that he had discharged his mission with great fidelity among them, and indefatigably employed his time in promoting the interest of religion in those parts.

Mr. Adams had the care of Pascotanck and Carotuck precincts. Pascotanck precinct then had no Church built in it. The roads here are the worst, but the country is closer settled, and better peopled than the other precincts. In their way of living, these people have much the advantage of the rest, being more industrious and careful. But they were above all, to be commended for their order, seriousness and decency, in attending Divine Worship.

Carotuck is the eastermost precinct, including the Sand Banks, and part of the south part of the Sound; a very incommodious place for damp colds in winter, and muschatoes in summer; they had no Church built here. Mr. Adams behaved himself with unwearied application; the extent of his mission was in some places above seventy miles. There were 839 souls in the precinct of Carotuck; he preached often, baptised here numbers of children, and administered the Sacrament. But the principal branch of his cure was the precinct of Pascotanck, where he chiefly resided. It contained above 1300 souls, 900 of which professed themselves members of the Church of England. He baptised in the Parishes of Pascotanck and Carotuck, above 214 children, besides grown persons, preached constantly, and administered the Sacrament in Pascotanck and in Carotuck.

When Mr. Gordon returned to England, Mr. Adams was much dejected, but resolved to make a farther effort. He continued very diligent in the discharge of his duty. However, the public distractions could not be composed through the perverseness of some Quakers. During all these broils, Mr. Adams behaved himself with so much moderation and diligence, as gained the favor and esteem of the most sober people, and preserved his character unblemished, even by his enemies. The parties here grew of more imbittered spirits, and Mr. Adams was quite wearied out with the hardships he met with: he intended to return to England in 1710, upon which the Vestry of Carotuck, and Col. Glover, wrote thus to the Society:

"Mr. Adams, during his abode among us, hath behaved himself in all respects, worthy the character of a Minister, exemplary in his life, and blameless in his conversation; and now being bound for England,

we with sorrowful hearts, and true love and affection, take our leave of him. We shall ever bless that Providence that placed him among us, and should be very unjust to his character, if we did not give him the testimony of a pious and painful pastor, whose sweetness of temper, diligence in his calling, and soundness of doctrine, hath so much conduced to promote the great end of his mission, that we hope the good seed God hath enabled him to sow, will bear fruit upwards." The Vestry of Pascotanck write to the same effect; and Colonel Glover, President of the Council there, transmitted these letters to the Society, and wrote thus with them: "The inclosed papers being put into my hand, I held myself bound to present them to your Board, and to join with the subscribers in the character they justly give of the Rev. Mr. James Adams, and to which I am sure all persons, who have any respect to religion, do heartily concur. As for the difficulties he met with, he hath waded through them, under the vigilant eyes of the malicious enemy, without committing anything unbecoming a Minister of Christ." But before Mr. Adams embarked for England, he fell sick, and died in Carolina.

3. The Society resolved again to assist this people; and appointed the Rev. Mr. Urmstone and Mr. Rainsford Missionaries there, about the year 1711. Mr. Urmstone took care of the North Shore, at the lower end of Chowan, with all Pascotanck; and Mr. Rainsford of the West Shore. But they had not been long in the country, before the civil feuds among that unhappy people were followed with an Indian war, which threatened the total ruin of the Colony; and had it not been for a very timely and powerful assistance from their neighbors, the South Carolinians, it might have been effected. The Corees and Tuskararo Indians near Cape Fear, made a terrible insurrection, fell upon the inhabitants of Renoque, killed 137 of them; most of the Palatines, with a Swiss Baron, perished in the massacre. The Indians carried their plot on with great cunning and secrecy, and put it thus in execution, in a few hours in many places. The Indians did not meet in one body; but in small parties of five or six men, waited as friends on those whom they purposed to destroy; and killed them with such weapons as they found in their houses, or near hand. The South Carolinians in this distress of theirs, advanced £4000 and sent Colonel Barnwell with 600 whites and 600 Indians to their assistance; after a difficult march he met the Indians, killed above three hundred, took one hundred prisoners, surrounded the rest, being about six hundred in a Fort, and forced them to sue for peace; which he granted, as not having provisions for his own men, if the Indians should have held out; the other straggling parties of the Indians retreated into the territories of Fort Augustino, and lay there secure, under the Spaniards' protection.

Mr. Urmstone, no doubt, could not avoid bearing a share in this general calamity; however, he continued some years an itinerant Missionary. He traveled as soon as the heat of the summer was over, through the whole government one hundred miles southward, beyond Neuze River, sixty miles westward towards Virginia, and as far northeast. He

baptized in one half year two hundred and seventy-nine, twelve whereof were grown persons; and had it not been for the neglect of the parents, and want of convenient passage both by land and water, a great many more might have been baptized. Mr. Rainsford also continued some time preaching on the West Shore, and by his labors kept alive, among a wild and scattered people, some sense of religion; but at length was quite fatigued with the hardships of the mission, and quitted it. Mr. Urmstone continued longer, but was in some years worn out with the many difficulties and distresses he met with, and returned to England.

Colonel Eden, then Governor of the country, wrote a very pressing letter to the Society in behalf of the people. Some time after, the Society appointed the Rev. Mr. Newnam Missionary; he arrived in North Carolina in 1722, and transmitted to the Society an account of his labors and success in his mission. The summary of which is as follows:

"After a long and fatiguing voyage of above four months, from December the 1st to April the 10th, myself and little family arrived at Carolina. The late Governor Eden being dead, I waited upon the President, a worthy gentleman, delivered him my credentials, with which he declared himself satisfied, and received me with great kindness and respect. I hope I shall do a great deal of good. The Vestry have laid out my journeys where I am to officiate. The first Sunday I go by water, and some few miles by land, and preach at Esquire Duckingfield's House, (which is large enough to hold a good congregation,) till such time as they build a Church, which is hereafter to be called Society Church; and in order to do it, they are now making a collection through the whole Parish. The second Sunday I take a journey up to a place called Maharim, about forty miles off, where there are abundance of inhabitants, who are also making a collection to build a Church forthwith. The third Sunday I perform Divine Service at Esquire Duckingfield's. The fourth Sunday I go up to a place called Wicacon, about thirty miles' journey. The fifth Sunday I cross the Sound to go to Eden town, where the Vestry have also proposed to build a Church very soon. The sixth Sunday I go up to a Chapel on the South Shore, about twelve miles by water; and the seventh Sunday begin the same course again. But once every quarter I go up to a place called Renoque, eighty miles' journey; and the five last Sundays of the year, the Vestry allow I may go my rounds, and visit the remote parts of the country, where some inhabitants live, one hundred and fifty miles off; people who will scarce ever have the opportunity of hearing me, or of having their children baptized, unless I go among them. The country is in general very well pleased with my coming among them, but the people are for the most part poor and very ignorant. I have baptized one hundred and twenty boys and ninety-one girls, five persons above twenty years of age, and two married women, this last year."

Upon bare reading of this letter, the reader will immediately reflect, that he must take indefatigable pains in performing so much difficult

duty. However, he persevered with great resolution. Some time afterwards other accounts came to the Society, that since his last letter, he had preached constantly, had baptized two hundred and sixty-nine children, one woman, and three men, who gave a very good account of their faith; and two negroes, who could say the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments, and had good sureties for their farther information; and that he designed shortly to go to Bath county, where he was greatly wanted, being informed there were at least three hundred children, whose parents desired his coming among them, to have them baptized.

But having contracted frequent and severe illnesses by constant traveling, he died in the year 1723, very much to the loss of all this people.

5. In the year 1725, Sir Richard Everet, going then over Governor, the Rev. Mr. Blacknal applied to be sent Missionary, and was employed by the Society, but they have had no account of his progress, and it is believed he hath left that country; so that this whole people, being now above ten thousand souls, are without any Minister. What Gov. Eden remarked to the Society in favor of this colony, deserves to be taken notice of here: "Though the state of this Government hath been for many years very unsettled, chiefly so by reason of intestine feuds; yet the people have declared themselves sincere members of the Church of England, by the Act of Assembly passed in 1715, for establishing the Church, and appointing select vestries; the preamble to which is as follows:" "This Province of North Carolina, being a member of the Kingdom of Great Britain; and the Church of England being appointed by the Charter from the Crown, to be the only established Church, to have public encouragement in it: We therefore to express our gratitude to the Right Honorable the Society for Promoting the Christian Religion in Foreign Parts, and our zeal for promoting our holy religion by making such provision for building Churches and Chapels, and maintaining of the Clergy, as circumstances of this Government will admit, &c. And by this Act, they divide the whole country into nine parishes, name vestries, and settle salaries for the Ministers of each parish, not exceeding £50, and provided the whole parish charges do not exceed five shillings per pole, on all taxable persons."

This speaks at least the good disposition of the people, though the £50 settled by the Act, would amount to a very small sum in sterling money. There are not above one or two Churches yet built in this Government; however, the Society have at several times by their Missionaries dispersed here above three hundred volumes of bound books, besides about £100 worth of small Tracts of devotion and instruction.

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL
00034013237

FOR USE ONLY IN

THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION

Form No. A-368, Rev. 8/95